



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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# Western Australia's Baby Boomers: A Profile of Persons Born 1946 - 1965

## Western Australia's Baby Boomers: A Profile of Persons Born 1946 - 1965



Col Nagle, Regional Director, ABS WA, and the Hon. Sheila McHale at the launch of the Baby Boomer Publication

A statistical snapshot of Western Australia's 557,700 baby boomers, their lifestyle, habits, health and diversity has been compiled by the ABS to address the changing needs of the state's ageing population. At the official launch of the publication *Western Australia's Baby Boomers: A Profile of Persons Born 1946 - 1965*, Seniors Minister, the Honourable Sheila McHale said baby boomers were challenging stereotypical views the community had about people in their middle to senior years. "The baby boomer cohort represents a diverse and complex sector with the youngest still rearing children and chasing careers and the oldest either retired or thinking about retirement," Ms McHale said. "They are predominantly consumer savvy, better educated, healthier, wealthier, more technologically advanced and living longer than their predecessors".

There's no doubt baby boomers make up an important part of our vibrant state. Businesses, governments, employers, educators, developers and planners across all sectors need to embrace this rapidly growing sector and ensure their products and services meet the needs and demands of our baby boomers.

For example, 17% of older baby boomers had no superannuation in 2000, 38% had less than \$20,000 and only 8% had more than \$100,000. In 2001, 25% of baby boomers were smokers and 51% were overweight or obese. So clearly we need to ensure our financial and public health messages and programs are guided by this information.

**Western Australia's Baby Boomers: A Profile of Persons Born 1946 - 1965 (cat. no. 4149.5)** is divided into seven sections covering demographics, cultural diversity, families, housing, health, education and work, and community life. The ABS has produced the Western Australian Baby Boomers publication in response to the need identified by State Government agencies for sound statistical information to inform policy development and planning for the ageing of Western Australia's baby boomer population.

The 'baby boom' describes the 20 year period immediately following World War II (1946 - 1965) where there was a substantial increase in the number of births and high population growth through net overseas migration. The high fertility rates experienced in Australia after World War II continued into the early 1960s, reaching a peak of 3.5 babies per woman in 1961. In WA, fertility rates were consistently higher and peaked earlier than the Australian rates, reaching 3.8 babies per woman in 1956. During the twenty year period between 1946 and 1965 there were over 300,000 people born in WA. The declining fertility rates in recent decades, coupled with improved life expectancy over the last century, have contributed to population ageing in WA, a phenomenon which has been observed throughout Australia and in many of the world's developed regions.

The fertility rate dropped through the mid-1960s with the introduction of effective contraception and the wider availability of abortion. In the late 1960s, legislation was passed which allowed married women to work in the public sector, and ensured that women should receive equal pay to men for equal work. These changes resulted in a steady increase in the participation of women in education and employment and a continuing decline in fertility rates.

The ABS projects that by 2041, 29% of WA's population will be aged 60 years and over. This is more than double the proportion of persons aged 60 years and over near the beginning of the baby boom (12% in 1947).

In 2001, 85% of baby boomers considered themselves to be in good, very good or excellent health, although one-quarter of all baby boomers were current smokers, 14% were consuming risky or high risk levels of alcohol, two thirds were sedentary or undertaking low levels of exercise and 51% were overweight or obese.

Just over three-quarters of all baby boomers lived in private dwellings which were either fully owned or being purchased at the time of the 2001 Census. Older baby boomers were more likely to own their own home outright than younger baby boomers (43% compared with 24%), whereas younger baby boomers were more likely to be purchasing their dwelling (49% compared with 36% for older baby boomers). 71% of persons aged 60 years and over lived in fully owned private dwellings. In 2001, 15% of younger baby boomers rented from private landlords, compared to 10% of older baby boomers and 6% of persons aged 60 years and over.

Baby boomers were more likely to be a volunteer than any other age group in 2000, with older baby boomers contributing the largest number of hours to volunteering activities. 17% of pre-retired baby boomers had no superannuation in 2000, 38% had less than \$20,000 and only 8% had more than \$100,000.

For further information, contact Gabriela Lawrence by email: [gabriela.lawrence@abs.gov.au](mailto:gabriela.lawrence@abs.gov.au) or phone (08) 9360 5947.

## Workshop: Developing Thailand's Disability Statistics

### Workshop: Developing Thailand's Disability Statistics



Chris Spencer (ABS, WA) and Dr Rossarin Gray (Mahidol University) at the workshop.

A capacity building workshop was conducted recently in Thailand (7-11 July) with the

objective of improving Thailand's disability statistics. The workshop was sponsored by the Social Protection Facility and funded through AusAID.

Participants included staff from Thailand's National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). Dr Rossarin Gray (Institute of Population and Social Research at Mahidol University) and Chris Spencer (ABS, Perth) were co-mentors for the workshop.

The workshop was designed to bring NSO and MSDHS staff together so that they had a better appreciation of their respective roles in terms of producing and using disability statistics to:

- analyse the existing situation regarding disability statistics
- develop plans for improving the statistics
- identify the learning needs of the participants

Chris presented a number of sessions at the workshop including an overview of the ABS, the status of disability statistics in Australia, National Statistical Service initiatives and information development plans. At the end of the workshop the group presented their views on the key issues that they would need to work on to achieve some tangible improvement in the quality and use of disability statistics. It is intended that the participants will visit Australia later this year to learn from the ABS and other agencies including the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare. Chris reported that the participants were an enthusiastic and friendly group of people who are keen to learn from the ABS and are looking forward to their visit to Australia.

While in Bangkok, Chris met with Lene Mikkelsen, Chief of the Statistics Development Section, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Lene was very interested in the capacity building workshop as ESCAP will shortly be hosting a workshop on disability statistics for the ESCAP region in Bangkok. Joanne Hillermann, ABS Canberra, will attend this workshop.

## Western Australian Statistical Indicators

### Western Australian Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1367.5)

The June 2003 issue of Western Australian Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1376.5) includes an analysis of recent movements in key State economic and labour market data, and two feature articles.

**Population measures: a case study.** This article aims to demonstrate the application of census and other population measures using the Goldfields region of Western Australia as a case study. The article covers both the resident and working populations of the Goldfields region.

The study highlights the dominance of the Mining industry in this region which has created a working population that includes a large number of fly in/fly out and temporary contract workers. Some of these workers do not report as 'usual residents' of the region in the Census even though they may have spent more than six months of the census year living in that region. Data from the study showed that more than 40% of the working population in the local government areas of Laverton, Leonora and Wiluna, indicated they were usual residents of Perth.

Place of employment data from the Census provides a more complete picture of the working population of each area at a particular point in time. The working population includes people counted outside the area on Census night and some 'non-usual residents' who were counted inside. Data on the working population can add significantly to our understanding of other census based population measures.

The second feature article, **Salinity and land management on Western Australian farms**, details the extent of land in Western Australia showing signs of salinity, strategies used by farmers, to manage and prevent salinity, and factors affecting land management change. In recent years salinity has emerged as a growing environmental issue because of the threat it poses to agriculture; to roads, houses and infrastructure; to our drinking water; and to biodiversity.

For further information, contact Andy Separovic by email: [andy.separovic@abs.gov.au](mailto:andy.separovic@abs.gov.au) or phone (08) 9360 5943.

## Development of Anti-Racism Strategy for WA

### Development of Anti-Racism Strategy for WA

The ABS has been working closely with State Government for several years in order to improve the ethnic and indigenous identification in administrative systems.

As part of this process the ABS held a series of seminars in 2000 in conjunction with The Office of Multicultural Interests. The aim of these seminars was to standardise the recording and reporting of ethnicity and multiculturalism across state government departments and agencies in WA. The ideals are encapsulated in **Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG)** (cat. no.1249.0).

The ABS furthered this close relationship when Dr Leela de Mel, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests addressed members of the Social Statistics Consultative Group (SSCG) on April 8, 2003. Dr de Mel spoke on the development of the State Governments' Anti-Racism Strategy for Western Australia, due to be launched later in 2004.

The Premier and Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, the Hon Dr Geoff Gallop is leading the development of the Strategy as Chairperson of the Anti-Racism Steering Committee.

The vision for the Strategy is to create an inclusive and harmonious Western Australia where all its members are treated equitably and fairly and reach their full potential with dignity and respect.

The Charter of Multiculturalism for Western Australia, released by the Premier for public comment, and the Statement of Commitment to a New and Just Relationship Between the Government of Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians, will provide the basis upon which the Strategy will be developed.

Challenges associated with developing this Strategy include:

- the difficulties in defining racism
- a lack of data on racism.

A question on ethnicity was asked for the first time in the 2001 Census and this information is currently available in census products and publications.

The ABS does not collect data on racism but offers a wide range of publications that address ethnicity, multiculturalism, and language and cultural diversity.

Related publications include **Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity** (cat. no. 1289.0), **Older People, Australia: A Social Report** (cat.no. 4109.0) and the **Indigenous Social Survey** (cat. no. 4714.0).

## Australian Social Trends

### Australian Social Trends (cat. no. 4102.0)

**Australian Social Trends** (cat. no. 4102.0) was released on June 3 2003. It presents information on contemporary social issues and areas of public policy concern, describing aspects of Australian Society and how these are changing over time. The publication has seven chapters each supported by a set of summary tables.

These include key social indicators which provide an overview of societal change over the past decade and how this change differs across Australian states and territories. Additionally, with the release of 2001 Census data, most chapters include at least one article that presents regionally based analysis.

A set of international tables also compares Australia with eighteen other nations. Australian Social Trends is designed to assist and encourage informed decision making to a wide audience including those engaged in research and social policy.

Copies of Australian Social Trends 2003 (cat. no. 4102.0) can be obtained either in hard copy or electronic format for \$49.00. Contact Marelle Rawson by email: [marelle.rawson@abs.gov.au](mailto:marelle.rawson@abs.gov.au) or phone (02) 6252 7187.

## Ageing In Australia

### Ageing In Australia (cat. no. 2048.0)

This publication, to be released in September 2003, will be a useful resource for agencies with ageing policy responsibilities, researchers and the Australian community. While the major focus is on the number and characteristics of older Australians (persons aged 65 years and over), it also explores the ageing process in Australia by examining other age cohorts including mature age workers (45 years and over) and the very old (85 years and over). This analysis also reports on trends over time by comparing 2001 census results with data from previous censuses.

Topics included in the publication are: population; cultural diversity; living arrangements; economic environment; transport; education and technology.

Copies of **Ageing in Australia** (cat. no. 2048.0) can be obtained for \$33.00.



# General Social Survey

## General Social Survey (cat. no. 4159.0)

To be released on 18 December, 2003 the first **General Social Survey** (cat. no. 4159.0) brings together a wide range of information which is linked in ways not previously available. The focus is on the relationships between characteristics from different areas of social concern, rather than in-depth information about a particular field.

Topics include health, housing, education, work, income, financial stress, broad assets and liabilities, transport, family and community, and crime. Summary tables provide an overview for different population groups and selected themes. More detailed cross classified tables also cover selected themes. A range of information not previously available from household surveys for smaller states, is also provided.

For further information, contact Graeme Groves by email: [graeme.groves@abs.gov.au](mailto:graeme.groves@abs.gov.au) or phone (02) 6252 5943.

# Regional Outreach Program

## Regional Outreach Program

**The Regional Outreach Program** is an ABS WA initiative designed to raise awareness and usage of ABS statistics in all levels of the government, private and community sectors in regional WA. It serves to provide a contact point for regional users; encourage regional organisations to use ABS data; and increase the ABS's understanding of the statistical needs of regional organisations.

A key plank of the program has been the presentation of a free one hour 'Regional Awareness Information Seminar'. The presentation discusses the range of ABS data (focussing particularly on data at the regional level), products and services available, and concludes with a short demonstration of the ABS web site.

Attendees are provided with handouts, including 2001 Census data and a copy of the presentation. At the completion of the seminar, there is an opportunity for people to network and raise issues on a one-on-one basis. ABS staff are also available to meet with organisations on a formal basis to discuss their statistical needs.

To date, seminars have been presented in Merredin, Geraldton, Port Hedland and Karratha. Those attending have found the presentations most informative.

Another key aspect of the ROP is the provision of email 'Information Alerts'. These are sent to regional organisations when ABS publications, which include sub-state level data, are released. These 'alerts' provide a brief overview about the publication including a direct hotlink to more detailed information on the ABS web site.

For further information, please contact Carmel Ryan by email: [carmel.ryan@abs.gov.au](mailto:carmel.ryan@abs.gov.au) or phone (08) 9360 5324.



From left to right: Neil Griffin and Carmel Ryan (ABS) and Karen Fischer (CCI, Karratha)

## National Statistical Service

### National Statistical Service

Following is an update of NSS activities:

- The NSS web site, on track for a November launch, will include tools to assist government agencies maximise the potential of their data holdings such as an operational handbook, best practice guidelines and key principles.
- Presentations on the NSS have been given at recent meetings of the Economic Statistics Consultative Group (ESCG) and the Social Statistics Consultative Group (SSCG).
- A number of state government agencies have been visited to provide them with an overview of the NSS and to discuss their data holdings and requirements.
- Information Development Plans (IDPs) are a key element of the NSS and will encapsulate the demand for information and identify any gaps, overlaps and deficiencies in the current supply of information for a particular field.
- Consultations with WA stakeholders have been held on the Agriculture and Transport IDPs, and a workshop, planned for September, will discuss a Crime and Justice IDP. Further consultation on IDP's are scheduled for this year and will include Rural and Regional Statistics, Tourism and Mining.

For further information, contact Cal Hoad by email: [cal.hoad@abs.gov.au](mailto:cal.hoad@abs.gov.au) or phone (08) 9360 5920.

## USERVIEW: The National Office for the Information Economy

### USERVIEW: The National Office for the Information Economy

On 26 June, 2003 Joseph Di Gregorio, Manager, Statistical Analysis & Benchmarking for The National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE), addressed the ABS WA Office on how he used ABS data to assist him in his work.

NOIE was established in September 1997 and currently has responsibility for the



development and coordination of advice to the Commonwealth on Information Economy Issues including:

- the impact of information and communications technology (ICT), including issues relating to technology and industry convergence
- the regulatory and physical infrastructure needed for on-line services including e-commerce
- the application of new technology to government administration, information and service provision
- assistance to business and government agencies to deliver services on-line
- consistency of the government's position relating to information economy issues in relevant international fora
- NOIE is responsible for the promotion, domestically and internationally, of the benefits of, and Australia's position in, the Information Economy.

NOIE's ability to provide informed advice to government on Information Economy issues depends to a large extent on the quality and scope of data supporting research at its disposal. However, the currency of many Information Economy issues means that much of the data and supporting research has not been available. NOIE has had to be very proactive in influencing the work of agencies such as the ABS and undertaking and commissioning research itself.

NOIE also recognises the position of the ABS as Australia's official statistical organisation, including the critical role it plays in supporting informed decision making, and continues to work with the ABS in the ongoing development of an ICT statistical framework.

## CENSUS 2006: The Public Consultation Process

### CENSUS 2006: The Public Consultation Process

The ABS sought comment from the public and census data users about the content and procedures of the next census, to be conducted on Tuesday 8 August, 2006. The invitation to have a say in the way the nation's largest statistical collection is undertaken was contained in an Information Paper, **2006 Census of Population and Housing, ABS Views on Content and Procedure** (cat. no. 2007.0).

The Information Paper describes the proposed procedures for the 2006 Census and the topics that might be included. These include key issues such as:

- examining the possibility of linking census data to other data sources to improve the usefulness of census data for statistical purposes
- topics to be included in, or excluded from, the 2006 Census.

The paper explains ABS arrangements to protect the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of the information supplied by them.

Public consultation is an essential part of ensuring that the Census is in the best position to meet the changing expectations of both the public and census users. This early consultation process enables views to be adequately considered in the lead up to the Census. Responses, including the advice of the Australian Statistical Advisory Council, will be used in preparing a final plan to be submitted to the federal government mid 2004.

The Information Paper is available via the ABS web site or can be obtained by contacting Roslyn Harvie by email: [roslyn.harvie@abs.gov.au](mailto:roslyn.harvie@abs.gov.au) or phone (02) 6252 7542

## Recently Released Publications

### Recently Released Publications

**Child Care, Australia** (cat. no. 4402.0). Triennial publication. Contains information on children under 12 years of age and family units with children under 12 years of age, classified by type and usage of child care and the child care benefit, number and age of children, days and hours of care, labour force status and birthplace of parents, demand for childcare and other demographic and economic attributes of the families, children or parents.

**Census of Population and Housing: Selected Characteristics for Urban Centres and Localities, Western Australia, Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands** (cat. no. 2016.5). Five yearly publication. Contains selected 2001 Census person, family and dwelling characteristics for all Urban Centres and Localities within Western Australia, Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands. Also includes ranked tables and reference maps.

**Australian Labour Market Statistics** (cat. no. 6105.0). First issue quarterly publication. The publication is the flagship release for all ABS labour statistics. It draws together data from a range of sources, mostly ABS household and business surveys, to provide an overview of the labour market. The key purpose of this publication is to raise awareness of the data available.

## Statistical Training

### Statistical Training

Need Statistical Training? The WA Statistical Consultancy section of the ABS offers a variety of **statistical courses and workshops**.

## Economic Statistics Consultative Group (ESCG)

### Economic Statistics Consultative Group (ESCG)

The latest meeting of the ESCG was held on 26 June, 2003. **Ian Hakanson and Marcus Devenish from the Strategic Analysis and Research Directorate, Department for Planning and Infrastructure**, provided the group with an overview of the automated Information Management System (INFORMS) they have devised. The system is designed to link all existing databases and systems within their organisation, thus facilitating access to the wealth of information contained therein.

**Cal Hoad, National Statistical Service Coordinator, ABS Perth**, presented an overview of the work being undertaken on the “National Statistical Service and Information Development Plans”.

**Darryl Malam, Economic and Regional Statistics Unit, ABS Perth**, summarised key aspects of the work he completed during his outposting at the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. This project was aimed primarily at examining stakeholder needs relating to road transport industry information; road usage and vehicle journey information; and road safety and crash information.

## Social Statistics Consultative Group (SSCG)

### Social Statistics Consultative Group (SSCG)

The latest meeting of the SSCG was held on 8 April, 2003. **Dr Leela de Mel, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests** addressed the group on the 'Development of an Anti-Racism Strategy for Western Australia'. Leela's presentation was very well received and an article on this subject has been included in this edition of Stats Talk. Thank you Leela!

**Cal Hoad, National Statistical Service Coordinator, ABS Perth** presented an overview of the work being undertaken on the “National Statistical Service”.

**Wavne Ridders, Assistant Director, Client Liaison Unit**, discussed the State Supplementary Survey, conducted each year in October as part of the Monthly Labour Force Survey. She called for submissions and suggestions for appropriate topics from members for the 2004 State Supplementary Survey.

## About this release

Stats Talk is a newsletter produced by the Western Australian office of the ABS. It provides information about new developments, publications, seminars, training and reviews.

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